4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

become a mother is announced to her husband's family, she becomes thenceforward the object of the most devoted attention on their part, the slightest wish or preference she may express being immediately gratified. Custom, however, forbids her eating certain things, such as pomegranates and snails, and she must not dye her hair more than three times before her baby is born, or some unlucky accident would be sure to happen to her or to the infant. 843

As soon as the baby is born it is washed, and a sickle, with which straw has just been cut, is laid for a few seconds on its stomach to prevent colics. The maternal grandmother, whose privilege it is to perform this office for the baby, then proceeds to swathe its little body tightly in broad swaddling bands of white woollen stuff, and finally deposits it in a narrow wooden cradle. A jar of water is taken to the Hodja or the Papas, according to the creed of the mother, to be blessed, and with some of its contents all the women who officiated at the birth wash their hands. The rest of the water is placed near the mother, and all the women who visit her during the five ensuing days dip their fingers in it and sprinkle her, expressing at the same time a wish that she may have a plentiful supply of milk for the baby, Albanian women making a point of nursing their own children. The relatives are now admitted to felicitate the mother and admire the baby, with the exception of its father, whom custom obliges to keep out of the way and refrain from seeing his child until it is eight days old. The mother is presently placed on a state bed, over which a magnificently embroidered silk coverlet 844 [603] [352] [855] [853] 846

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

were publicly mocked as 'low-class fellows'. Sometimes they had no choice, being so disobedient and unruly that their father compelled them to leave his house. Or they got on so badly with each other that he feared there would be murder done.

Three factors militated against separation. There was the sense of family which was so strong that four or five generations, numbering twenty souls or more, might live under one roof. Secondly, it was economically to the advantage of each man that the household should remain together. In a large household all branches of the pastoral and agricultural life were possible, but in a small one activities must be restricted; one and the same person could not tend cows and oxen, ewes and lambs. With good reason the proverb says 'Separation ruins a family'. In the bad old days too, it was strategically good for brothers to stick together; the more guns in a house the stronger it was.

When separation had been decided on, the family possessions were divided equally without any regard for primogeniture. Everything that could be eaten or drunk—dairy produce, grain, haricot beans, eggs, honey, raki—was considered food and divided equally among the mouths to be fed, and everything else—land, livestock, farm implements, house, household utensils—was considered property and divided equally between the brothers.

The law of food, as expanded, laid down that every living soul in the house on the day of separation, male and female, sick and well, greybeard and infant drawing its first breath, should receive the same share of food. Supposing one of the two brothers had besides his wife ten children, and the other two, the first received twelve portions of food and the second four. Then the age clause was variously interpreted. In Dibër even a child still in the womb was allotted a full portion, but elsewhere one born so little as an hour after the conclusion of the separation received nothing and the prospective father naturally tried to protect himself against this loss by delaying the separation, if possible, until the child had been born. In Lumë and Mirditë a child less than a year old was not given food, the idea being that its mother's milk would suffice for it throughout the coming year—partly to avoid conception Albanian children were everywhere suckled until they were three years of age. In other areas a new-born child received its quota on the assumption that before a year was out it would 'eat a little, spill a little and let the cat eat a little'. Separation generally, though not

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Montenegrins EF5

A 754 of the blood on a silver coin, wrap it up, and wear it as an amulet. It will protect you from all blood-sucking shtrigas.

A [163 761] Shtrigas especially like the blood of children. Child mortality in all Balkan lands is exceedingly high. It is not unusual to find women who have borne from eight to twelve children, of whom none, or but one or two, survive. Nor could I ever make them believe that it was the way in which the babes were kept that was the real cause. So

A [751] terrified are the mothers that the Evil Eye may fall on the child that they guard it by keeping its heavy wooden cradle wrapped in a thick

A [853 777] woollen coverlet. No Evil Eye, and no ray of light or breath of fresh air, can penetrate. When suckling, the mother takes the cradle on her knees or kneels over it, and raises just enough of the rug to enable her to give the breast; both cradle and child are hung with amulets. The

M 754 853 same method, too, is popular in Montenegro and Bosnia. I have seen luckless infants as white as bleached celery, slowly pining away; but the poor mother believed the pining due to a shtriga, who had put a curse on her breast and poisoned her milk, or had looked at the

A 755 child with an Evil Eye. Only the very strong survive. Marko used to prescribe washing the child with a decoction of walnut leaves. Neither he nor anyone else would believe me when I begged for fresh air and sunlight.

A 754 755 Only she who has caused the evil can undo it. My old friend, Tony Precha, who was a mine of old-world lore, told me how a shtriga was forced to do this: "The child of our neighbour was slowly pining away. It was the work of a shtriga. One day it died. I saw it cold and dead. The father, in a fury, shouted that he knew who had killed it. He

A [681] rushed out and caught a woman and dragged her in. She screamed and denied that she had done it. He dragged her to the dead child, crying, 'Spit in its mouth!' She refused, and struggled and screamed. If she did not spit before the sun went down it would be too late. She knew this, and that was why she would not spit, for it was already late. Then the father, in despair, put his pistol to her head and shouted, 'Spit or I fire!' She spat. The father threw her out of the door. Then we watched the child. Very slowly it began to revive, and in three hours it was quite well. The father had saved it by acting at once." And Tony saw this with his own eyes.

How apt are most of us to believe that *post hoc* is *propter hoc*.

A 754 776 777 In Albania evil spirits are most active in the spring. Garlic is tied round children's necks on or about Shrove Tuesday as a special precaution. In Shala, and, I believe, other tribes, the women tie a black cord with three knots in it to the doorposts along with a pair of scissors, the wool-carding comb, and some berries (species unknown). This is not merely to protect the house, but to prevent shtrigas and bad spirits

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Contemporary Macedonians EF8
Montenegrins EF5

enough creature near Scutari, was esteemed as very good for consumptive patients.

The flesh of the common land tortoise was thought of great value for all convalescents. When I came out of hospital Marko had prepared a savoury stew for my supper. I ate heartily. "Thank God!" cried the good old man, "you have eaten 'breshké,' and you will soon be strong and well." He fetched the shell of the large tortoise which had provided my meal.

So common are these tortoises that an Albanian proverb says: "There is no mountain without a wolf and no plain without a tortoise."

Diseases.—Intestinal troubles of all kinds are rife in the Balkans, owing to bad food, and in some districts to a morbid appetite for very acid food. Intestinal worms—tape, thread, and round—are very common. A preparation of buckthorn is given.

Infant mortality is excessively high all through the Balkans. If a mother can nurse her child till the flocks are giving milk plentifully it stands a chance; if not, it is fed on parboiled maize-flour and heavy maize-bread. The abdomen swells greatly, and the child often dies; and, as I have stated, desire to preserve the child from the Evil Eye causes many to be half-suffocated in the cradle. Only the toughest survive, and they are very tough. The Albanians, Montenegrins, and Macedonians, whom I have had charge of as sick or wounded, do not suffer from shock, nor are they as sensitive to pain as West Europeans.

Wounds.—The Albanian tribesmen were far cleverer with wounds than with sickness. They had a traditional antiseptic treatment which was very successful. Old Marash Hutzi of Hoti, who had learnt the art from his grandfather, explained it to me. A wound must never be touched with water; it must be thoroughly washed out with rakia (brandy distilled from grapes). He judged the state of a wound by smelling it carefully. When well washed—when it perforated a limb he poured rakia right through—he dressed it with an ointment he made from white wax, olive oil, pine resin, and a decoction of the bark of green elder twigs. If deep, he plugged it with wool soaked in this ointment. In hot weather the dressings should be changed twice a day; and so long as the wound was foul he washed it daily with rakia. He saved a leg—compound comminuted fracture caused by horse-kick—which the Turkish military surgeon was going to amputate and made a quite usable, though rather shortened, limb of it. The grateful patient gave him thirty francs, the biggest fee the good old man had ever received. He had made his own instruments—some probes, forceps, a small saw made from a barrel hoop, and some knives.

From his grandfather's and his own experience he had a fair knowledge of where the main arteries ran, "where it was safe to cut and where